

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SCA-01 EB-07 OC-05 DOTE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

USIE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 A-01 OPR-02 FAA-00 CCO-00 /037 W

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P 302148Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1591

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, HO

SUBJECT: COMMERCIAL AVIATION ACCIDENT AT TONCONTIN AIRPORT,
TEGUCIGALPA

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 4704; B. FAM 526.1

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. SERVICIO AEREO DE HONDURAS, S.A. (SAHSA) FLIGHT 417, WHICH ORIGINATED IN NEW ORLEANS AND MADE INTERMEDIATE STOPS IN BELIZE AND SAN PEDRO SULA, WENT OFF RUNWAY 01 AT END OF LANDING RUN AT TONCONTIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (POSITION 14 DEG. 02 MIN. N, 87 DEG. 14 MIN. W) NEAR TEGUCIGALPA. THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED AT APPROXIMATELY 1645 LOCAL TIME ON 29 OCTOBER. THE AIRCRAFT, A BOEING 737-200 WITH HONDURAN REGISTRY NUMBER HR-SHA, IS OWNED AND OPERATED BY SAHSA.

2. THE PLANE CARRIED 74 PASSENGERS AND 6 CREW MEMBERS. NO DEATHS OR SERIOUS INJURIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED ALTHOUGH A NUMBER OF PERSONS SUFFERED MINOR INJURIES.

3. CAPTAIN JORGE URBIZO, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS OF THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION IN HONDURAS (DGAC), INFORMED EMBOFF THAT THE ACCIDENT WAS UNDER INVESTIGATION BY HIS OFFICE. URBIZO
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SAID THAT DGAC DID NOT PRESENTLY PLAN TO INVITE APPROPRIATE U.S.

OFFICIALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION. EMBASSY WILL MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH DGAC. URBIZO COULD NOT PROVIDE AN ACCURATE ESTIMATE OF THE DAMAGE TO THE PLANE. HE ADDED THAT EMPLOYEES OF THE BOEING COMPANY WERE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN TEGUCIGALPA ON 31 OCTOBER TO ADVISE AND ASSIST IN THE REPAIR OF THE AIRCRAFT. URBIZO SAID THAT THE EMBASSY WOULD HAVE TO REQUEST A COPY OF THE ACCIDENT REPORT FROM HIS OFFICE BY LETTER. THAT SAME LETTER, HE ADDED, SHOULD ALSO CONTAIN A REQUEST FOR A STATEMENT BY THE GOH REGARDING WHETHER THE REPORT MAY BE MADE PUBLIC.

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4. DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICER RETURNING BELIZE TO TEGUCIGALPA VIA COMMERCIAL AIRLINE SAHSA FLIGHT 417 MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT CONCERNING ACCIDENT.

5. FLIGHT UNEVENTFUL TO SAN PEDRO SULA AND THRU OUT INSTRUMENT APPROACH AT TONCONTIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. PILOT WAS VFR ABOUT FOUR MILES OUT AND PERFORMED STRAIGHT IN. UPON LANDING ROLL OUT (TOUCH DOWN 1200-1500 FT. DOWN RWY 01) FULL REVERSE WAS EVIDENT ON SCHEDULE, BUT SPOILERS NEVER EXTENDED AND WHEEL BRAKING WAS NOT APPARENT. AIRCRAFT WAS STILL ROLLING FAST (MAYBE 70 KNOTS) AS WE PASSED LAST TAXIWAY TOWARD CLIFF AT END OF RUNWAY. (1500 FT. REMAINING). PASSENGERS WERE AWARE AND BRACING FOR CRASH. VIOLENT BRAKING, POSSIBLY EMERGENCY SYSTEM, TOOK PLACE AT ABOUT 800 FT. FROM END OF RWY, SMOKE POURED FROM REGION OF TIRES BUT NONE BLEW, AND PILOT STEERED AIRCRAFT INTO LEFT 30 DEGREE SKID. AIRCRAFT DEPARTED LIP OF RWY AT LESS THAN 30 KNOTS AND WENT DOWN EMBANKMENT. ATTITUDE WENT 30 DEGREES NOSE LOW WITH 20 DEGREES RIGHT ROLL. STOP WAS SLIDING RATHER THAN VIOLENT. LEFT ENGINE SPOOLED DOWN IMMEDIATELY AS AIRCRAFT STOPPED. RIGHT ENGINE CONTINUED TO OPERATE AT FULL REVERSE THRUST."

6. "AS MOVEMENT STOPPED, I UNBUCKLED AND POINTED OUT LEFTHAND OVER THE WING EXIT TO AMBASSADOR SANCHEZ SEATED TO MY RIGHT, ONE ROW BEHIND EXIT ROW. I PUSHED PAST AMBASSADOR AND GOT TO EXIT WHICH ONE 90-LB HONDURAN WOMAN WAS TRYING TO OPEN WITHOUT SUCCESS. I WAS JOINED BY SGT CARRASQUILLO (SEATED BEHIND ME ONE ROW) AND

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TOGETHER WE REMOVED EXIT INWARD AND HELPED ABOUT 12 PEOPLE EXIT. I REMEMBER SEEING THE AMBASSADOR AND COL FESSENDEN IN GROUP. EXIT WAS ORDERLY. RIGHT ENGINE WAS STILL OPERATING IN FULL REVERSE. I WAS CONCERNED FOR FIRE BUT SAW NO IMMEDIATE DANGER. I WAS FACING REAR AND COULD SEE A LARGE GROUP USING EXIT SLIDE AT REAR OF AIRCRAFT. STEWARDESSES HAD GROUP UNDER FULL CONTROL. SGT CARRASQUILLO AND I WERE READY TO EXIT, LAST PEOPLE AT AIRCRAFT MID SECTION. RIGHT ENGINE HAD BEEN SHUT DOWN BY THIS TIME. WE NOTICED AN OLD

MAN IN DAZED CONDITION LEAVE GROUP AT REAR AND COME DOWN AISLE.
LUIS HELD MAN WHILE I EXITED, THEN LUIS PUSHED HIM OUT TO ME.
ALL EXITED AIRCRAFT."

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SANCHEZ

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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